



Commandant's NOTE

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THE INFANTRY TRAINING CENTER

In several of my previous notes, I have pointed out many important things we do at Fort Benning to assist the Army in accomplishing its varied missions. Nothing we do, however, is more important than the job the officers and men of our Infantry Training Center do everyday. They receive all of the Army's new enlisted Infantry soldiers and train them to become basic Infantrymen qualified to take their place in Infantry squads, platoons, and companies.

The training program our Center uses—12 weeks and 3 days in length—is a demanding one and is conducted in five phases. The first three phases are associated with basic combat training (BCT) while the last two phases are devoted to specific training in CMF II. To continue in the program, the basic soldiers must pass a test at the end of each phase. Each phase, therefore, is a building block that integrates the skills that were taught during the previous phase.

During the BCT phases the new soldiers are introduced to the military way of life and the profession of arms. In addition to following a daily physical training program that continues throughout their time at the training center, the new soldiers receive instruction in such subjects as drill and ceremonies, military courtesy and customs, basic combat skills (including weapon training and qualification), bayonet training, map reading, individual tactical training, and antiarmor techniques.

In the last two phases of training, Phases IV and V, the soldiers are trained along MOS-specific

tracks: IIB, IIBC2, IIC, IIH, and IHE9. At the end of Phase V, selected IIB soldiers receive an additional two weeks of training on the Bradley fighting vehicle, to include driving the vehicle and performing operator maintenance. Those soldiers who successfully complete this additional training are awarded the IIM MOS.

The soldiers who follow the IIB and IIBC2 tracks receive squad tactical training in which they learn to move as members of a squad. They are also trained with the M249 machinegun, in military operations on urban terrain (MOULT), and are given additional antiarmor training using the M47 Dragon and the M136 (AT4) launcher.

Meanwhile, those soldiers selected for the IIC (mortarman) track are trained with and qualify on the 81mm mortar. In addition, they are introduced to the 60mm and 107mm mortar fire direction center, and forward observer procedures. The soldiers who follow the IIH and IHE9 tracks are trained on the TOW missile system and the M901 ITV (improved TOW vehicle) system.

Throughout its training program, the Center emphasizes tactical realism and reinforcement as well as the integration of previously learned subjects in each block of instruction. These methods, along with the use of after action reviews, allow the soldier to reach his full potential. Discipline is key to this process, and is stressed throughout the program. Finally, the Center gives its soldiers enough work to keep them busy, training six days a week during the training cycle. The soldiers are challenged every day with new

skills to learn and master.

By the time they complete their training, our Infantry soldiers have passed an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), have been certified on at least 34 performance-oriented critical skills, and have qualified with the M16A2 rifle and other MOS-specific weapon systems. In short, they have been institutionally trained on many of the entry Level One soldier tasks.

When these soldiers arrive at their first units, the units receive an information packet on each. It contains an individual training record (DA Form 5286-R), which is a formal record of the tasks in which the soldier has been certified, along with his weapon and APFT qualification records.

Because of time constraints, these soldiers must be trained on the remaining Skill Level 1 tasks in their new units. I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is for our field commanders to receive these new Infantrymen properly. It is imperative that they be met with concern, compassion and dignity and that they be promptly integrated into the unit training program. They must also be imbued with a team spirit that will make it easier for them to learn

the higher level skills their units will expect them to know.

In addition to continuing its one station unit training program, the Infantry Training Center was given the mission during Operation DESERT STORM of conducting refresher training for about 3000 Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who had been recalled to active duty. In this endeavor, the Center was aided by another group of recalled Army Reservists—members of the 70th Division (Training)—who filled in admirably for many of their Active Army counterparts who were called away to serve in Southwest Asia. It is interesting to note that a number of the 70th Division's soldiers had only recently completed their annual training duties with the Center.

I am firmly convinced that the Training Center is producing a better Infantry soldier than ever before and is providing the field Army with soldiers who are well trained, disciplined, motivated, and willing to do the job. I encourage all of our field commanders to plan to visit the Center the next time they come to Fort Benning and to observe the training that it offers. I believe you will find it an educational and rewarding experience.

